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Three Positive Innovation Impacts

That Would Impact My Industry

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As I researched several organizations, looking closely at Mission Statements in each, I found that each is dedicated to the education and success of students in the classroom. That wasn’t original, but I knew I was in the right place. The most interesting, and proactive of the suggested organizations was ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education [formerly NECC – National Education Computer Conference]). I found that for my needs as an educator ISTE provides conferences that cover everything from basics to the particulars of the craft of technology. The three innovations which I considered useful for my needs were: podcasts, [Computer Using Educators (CUE)](http://www.cue.org/conference/" \t "_blank) digital text books [National Educational Computing Conference (NECC)](http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2008/" \t "_blank) and [Moodle](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Moodle" \o "Moodle).

In theory, all three are excellent innovations for students on all levels. The very thought of face-to-face communication within a podcast scenario (even a webnar scenario) is an exciting break-through for most classrooms. The problem is the dependence on a website. And so, I looked further and found reference to digital textbooks. With the new emergence of the Kindle and other devices to transcribe textbooks to digital format, this could be an opening for more information with less cost in a convenient form. However, there is again a problem with access to websites and availability of subjects in an approved text.

Then I examined a new program called Moodle – designed for stand-alone servers. This would be a solution to the problem of access to websites, but there would be a problem with adoption because of political and economical restraints.

The reason for the problems that I have described is that I teach in a prison, and there are quite a few restrictions levied for any materials going in and out of the unit. There is no internet, but there is an intranet. Teachers and students are restricted to downloads from the mainframe located in Huntsville, TX. Teachers have no access to any websites within the prison walls, except what has been approved by opinion leaders and sometimes change agents. The 21st Century has not caught up with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or Windham School District, but there are some strides in incorporating the CAI-Labs into the GED literacy programs.

I am hoping that one day I might convince the opinion leaders and perhaps become a change agent in reconstructing the attitudes of those who are seeking to provide quality education to the offenders and return them to society as useful citizens with skills that are up to date and relevant to the changing economic and social environment.